



Week 2 Assignment

Overview

You have described and analyzed two of your school's community involvement programs, their goals, their levels of participation and various aspects that prevent and promote their success. In this week's assignment, you will design a new, or strengthen an existing, community partnership that integrates school, family, and/or community resources to more effectively support student achievement.

As you brainstorm the development of your partnership, consider the following questions:

- What will the partnership accomplish?
- Who are the partnership's stakeholders?
- What broad and specific goals do you hope the partnership will achieve?
- What community resources will contribute to this partnership?
- How will the partnership procure the required resources/approvals?
- Who should lead the program, and who should be involved?
- How will information be communicated to all stakeholders?
- What other people or organizations are already working on this issue/need?
- How much time will it take to establish the partnership?
- What steps must be taken to establish and launch the partnership?
- What research supports investing time, money, and personnel in these tasks?
- How will the proposed partnership be evaluated?

Rubric

Use the following Rubric to guide your work on the Week 2 Assignment.

Tasks ↓	Accomplished 15 The evidence suggests that this work is a "Habit of Mind." The educator is ready to mentor others in this area.	Proficient 12 The evidence suggests that performance on this work matches that of a strong educator.	Needs Improvement 9 The evidence does not yet make the case for the educator being proficient at this task.
Gathering Data	Student clearly identifies data that supports the need for the proposed family-school-community partnership.	Student cites school data, some of which supports the need for the proposed family-school-community partnership.	Student provides a minimal description of student need, the proposed partnership, and /or research supporting the proposed partnership activities.
Initial Partnership Proposal	Student introduces and provides a detailed scope of the proposed family-school-community partnership, and provides a compelling, evidence-based rationale for the recommended partnership activities.	Student identifies the project and provides a general scope of the proposed partnership, and provides some evidence-based resources in support of the proposed partnership activities.	Student does not identify an appropriate project, provide a scope of the proposed partnership, and/or provide any evidence-based rationale in support of activities.
Assignment Mechanics	Responses are relevant to course content; no errors in grammar, spelling, or punctuation.	Responses are relevant to course content; few errors in grammar, spelling, or punctuation.	Responses do not reflect knowledge of course content, lack clarity and depth, and/or include multiple errors in grammar, spelling, and punctuation, including APA errors.

Week 2 Assignment, Part 1: Gathering Data

To complete Part 1 of this assignment, answer the questions provided.

Current Reality: Identify a current student issue or need that interferes with academic achievement at your school. Cite data that supports the need. This could be data that relates to academic achievement, student attendance, discipline, or other sources. Look at trends of data and disaggregated data, where available.

In the last three years, our ESL population, specifically the Spanish speaking population, in our district has grown. My school specifically has seen the growth since we are the only elementary in our district with an ESL program. The other three elementary schools in my district transfer their ESL students to our campus. Since this growth has started to take place, we do not have any specific committees assist in the education of our ESL population and even our website does not have information for ELS parents and students.

Using the AIES report from 2009-2010, I recorded information that was rather eye-opening. Our school did not have a large enough Hispanic population to even be considered a subpopulation until 2010 in grades three and four. On the 2010 fourth grade reading TAKS only 80% of our Hispanic population passed reading. This is a large discrepancy since the campus average is 99% passing. Only 25% of the Hispanic population received commended on TAKS whereas the campus average was 75% earning commended performance. The middle school and high school in our district do not have any testing data on their Hispanic population since they have not encountered a growth in students. They still do not have enough students to count as a subpopulation.

Vision: How will the family-school-community partnership that you are proposing resolve the issue by meeting the demonstrated need, and how will it support student achievement?

Since many of our families are not directly in our school's zone, the parents often feel like outsiders. Our school needs to help educate our parents of ESL students in ways to become more active in the school and benefit from the partnership. The majority of these students come from affluent homes. For this reason we do not have to work with any social service groups as some districts with lower socioeconomic difficulties need. Our main point of difficulty is in regards to keeping our parent community informed and connected to the campus so that the resources offered can be utilized at home. Posting information on services, educational websites, and if possible, resources in the families' home language.

My vision is to keep parents of ESL students informed through the school website using the Google translation widget, a Facebook fanpage, and a Twitter account.

Week 2 Assignment, Part 2: Initial Partnership Proposal

The first step in establishing either a new family-school-community partnership, or strengthening an existing one, is to clearly articulate your idea. While your idea will probably evolve as stakeholders contribute their perspectives, you will use this assignment to solidify your initial concept.

To complete this assignment, fill out the chart.

Describe the need for the new or improved school-community partnership. Summarize the strategies/ activities you are recommending.

Parents of ESL students often do not understand the importance of becoming involved in school. Often the parents do not feel they are invited to participate and some feel like they would be intruding if they come to the school. Parents of ESL students often do not speak English so a translation device on the website would be beneficial since so many different languages are spoken in my school's ESL population. Students and parents also appreciate links to sites that will help improve their English skills.

Recommendations and strategies:

- Google Translate bar on the website to assist parents of other languages to understand information being presented on the webpage. Since we have such a variety of new languages constantly arriving on our campus, it is rather difficult to translate all materials and the translate bar will assist parents in being informed with the help of 21st century tools.
- Have specific links to assist students in their language acquisition.
- Elaborate on ways parents can get involved in the school since as stated above in the research, parent involvement helps to ensure student success. Plus if parents are informed in ways to become involved they will feel more welcomed at the school.
- Explain importance of parent involvement using specific information from research given above to ensure parents understand significance of volunteering.
- Create a Facebook "fanpage" for parents of ESL students to help keep them updated on specific information they might find useful in "real time" and using 21st century tools.
- Promoting the website through classroom teachers and ESL teacher to parents personally and by phone.
- Encourage parent use of School's twitter page for instant and real time updates.

Reference the research that supports the strategies/ activities you are recommending.

Pena (2001) recommends making the parents feel more welcomed. School staff must communicate regularly with parents through various methods in order to meet the educational and language needs of parents. Information must be available in the parents' native language and teachers need to use social networks to keep parents informed. To increase parent involvement, teachers and parents should first begin with a shared understanding of parent involvement, as well as each other's strengths and weaknesses (Pena, 2001, pg. 42).

Rutherford and Billig (1995) suggest that continuous parent/family participation and community involvement depend on active support by leaders. Teachers and other school

personnel are key players in family involvement and that families are connected to the services provided by the school or the community.

Epstein's Framework (Epstein, et al., 1997) suggests that in communicating language translators are beneficial to assist families as needed. With a translator on the website, parents who speak other languages will benefit from the translation assistance. For "learning at home" Epstein suggests having a regular schedule for notices and other communications. Utilizing Twitter and the Facebook fanpage will help keep parents up to date on the activities of the school and specific ways to assist students.

Epstein, J. L., Coates, L., Salinas, K. C, Sanders, M. G., & Simon, B. S. (1997). Epstein's framework of six types of involvement. *School, family, and community partnerships: Your handbook for action*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Pena, D. (2001). Parent involvement: Influencing factors and implications. *The Journal of Education Research*. 94(1), 42.

Rutherford, B., & Billig, S. H. (1995). Eight lessons of parent, family, and community involvement in the middle grades. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 77(1), 64-66, 68.

Compose three or more measurable goals for the school-community partnership.

- As an outcome of more encouragement of parents of ESL students, they will feel more welcomed at the school and volunteer more at the school.
- Administrators and teachers will update Twitter and/or Facebook Fanpage with pertinent information.
- Many families with ESL students will join the Facebook fanpage and leave positive comments and/or post specific information.
- Two way communication between families with ESL students and school will increase due to the postings made on the fanpage and comments left by parents and teachers.

How will the school-community partnership increase student achievement?

Encouraging parents and teachers to utilize the school's website for meaningful two way communication will assist in increasing the level of student achievement. Parents can leave comments via the Facebook fanpage which is often less intimidating for some parents than meeting face to face. Using 21st century skills will also keep parents informed in real time instead of having to wait until the once a week news day when parents are bombarded with a mass amount of information that is difficult to sift and find important information. If parents are kept up to date on upcoming events, student successes, and help at the time of student limitations, then students will succeed.

Identify the school-community partnership's stakeholders.

Parents of ESL students
Employers of parents
Administrators
Teachers
Campus Instructional Technologist
School board
Community Members

What are the steps to approval and implementation of the partnership? What are possible sources of funding?

The implementation of this partnership would be rather simple. I would first need the ESL teacher's permission to discuss implications and to confer on details. I would then need to ensure the principal approved of the venture. Since the Facebook fanpage would only be for those parents interested in utilizing that means of social media, we would be following the age requirements of Facebook. I would send out permission forms to parents in case photos were posted on the Fanpage. After those areas are approved, I would then venture into discussions with teachers to make sure they were well informed and trained so they feel positive about the undertaking.

The partnership is not very expensive. All the fundamentals are without cost. Since the social media platforms chosen, the website, Google translator, and parent volunteers are without cost, funding is not necessary. If we find that funding may be necessary the principal has discretionary funding or the Gift Committee might want to allocate funding.

What resources are required for the partnership?

I would need to make sure that the links provided are up to date. The ESL teacher and I would need to confer on the best resources to utilize for our parent communication and student links. I would need to train the ESL teacher on proper utilization of Facebook and security features. Updating the school's website to have the Google translation bar would be a needed piece for the website. Since the translator gadget is a simple HTML code to add to the website it would be important to ensure that the webmaster is able to update page with a working translator. Since I am the webmaster on my campus, it would not be a problem.

How will you market your school-community partnership idea?

The first step in creating a positive result is in educating the teachers. I would start with classroom teachers and the ESL teacher. I would make sure they all understood the importance of creating a welcoming atmosphere for parents. I would show them how to effectively utilize the twitter account and how to post important updates on the Facebook fanpage. At this point I would reiterate to the teachers that the fanpage was not for students but for parents since the students on our campus are under the legal age to use Facebook. I would show the teachers the ease of use of the Google translator. I would work with teachers

to ensure they had their school website up to date with links to help their students of all backgrounds and especially their ESL students. I would make sure the teachers understood the importance of marketing these features to their ESL students and parents whenever opportunities arise.

The next step would be to show the students how to utilize the Google translator widget so they could also be able to utilize the school's website and find appropriate links to assist them with their growth in the English language. I would then show the students that information will be posted for their parents on the Facebook fanpage. Since our students are under the legal age to use Facebook, we would not market the Facebook page as a means for student communication but for parents.

Since I do not speak all the home languages that are present in our ESL community it would not be beneficial to have a meeting with parents. Instead I would show the students the specific page and ask them, whenever appropriate, explain the information to their parents. I would also create a short flash video without too much narration to explain the parts of the page to assist parents in the utilization of the Facebook fanpage, Twitter account, and school webpage. I would also invite parents to join the Facebook fanpage.

How will you evaluate your partnership's outcomes?

1. As an outcome of more encouragement of parents of ESL students, they will feel more welcomed at the school and volunteer more at the school.
 - Quantitative: We use "Raptor" and every time a parent comes to volunteer they must sign in using Raptor. We can evaluate this by comparing the data we have on our volunteers.
 - Qualitative: We can also ask teachers if they have seen an increase in volunteers and the outcomes.
2. Administrators and teachers will update Twitter and/or Facebook Fanpage with pertinent information.
 - By visiting the Twitter page and the Facebook fanpage will show whether it is being updated or not being updated by the Administrator and teachers.
3. Many families with ESL students will join the Facebook fanpage and leave positive comments and/or post specific information.
 - Since the Facebook Fanpage will only allow people to join, evaluating the number of requests by members as they join is one way to get numbers.
 - Another way is to visit the fanpage to ensure parents are leaving comments or postings.
4. Two way communication between families with ESL students and school will increase due to the postings made on the fanpage and comments left by parents and teachers.
 - Quantitative: teachers will evaluate whether they see an increase in parent communication and whether the utilization of the Facebook fanpage was appropriate.